

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L ATHENS 7663

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: SEDU, GR

SUBJECT: AMBASSADOR'S CALL ON MINISTER OF EDUCATION

1. SUMMARY. MINISTER LOUROS EXPRESSED CONCERN THAT STUDENT INITIATIVES, PARTICULARLY STUDENT ELECTIONS NOVEMBER 9, THREATENED SECURITY PROBLEMS AND POSSIBLE POTENTIAL EMBARRASSMENT FOR THE GOVERNMENT. HE INDICATED THAT A POLICY OF ACCOMMODATING STUDENTS AND MINIMAL USE OF POLICE RESTRAINT WILL, NONETHELESS, CONTINUE BECAUSE, ON WHOLE, STUDENTS ARE CORRECT IN THEIR ANALYSIS AND DESERVE OFFICIAL TRUST. BESIDES, IT IS UNTHINKABLE THAT THE GOG COULD OR WOULD PRESENTLY USE FORCE AGAINST THE STUDENTS. THE MINISTER SYMPATHIZES WITH STUDENTS' PARAMOUNT CAMPAIGN THAT FACULTY BE PURGED AND ALSO IMPLIED THAT ARMED FORCES NEEDED RADICAL SHAPING UP. HE DECLARED EMPHATICALLY THAT GREECE IN TIME WOULD REENTER NATO. END SUMMARY.

2. IN HOUR COURTESY CALL OCTOBER 22 BY AMBASSADOR KUBISCH, MINISTER OF EDUCATION AND RELIGION NICHOLAS LOUROS CONFIDED HIS ANXIETY THAT STUDENT RADICALISM MIGHT YET PROVE UNWIELDY AND DIFFICULT TO MANAGE DESPITE GOVERNMENT'S ACCEPTANCE OF MANY STUDENT DEMANDS. HE SAID GOG FELT IT HAD TO "GIVE IN" TO ILLEGAL PUBLIC RALLIES OF STUDENTS AND TO HOLDING STUDENT ELECTIONS

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NOVEMBER 9 - ONLY ONE WEEK BEFORE NATIONAL ELECTIONS. GOG DID NOT

INTEND TO USE FORCE AGAINST STUDENTS AND TRUSTED STUDENT SELF-DISCIPLINE AND MORAL SUASION TO KEEP MOMENTUM WITHIN TOLERABLE LIMITS AND TO UNDERCUT FEW EXTREMISTS. PROFESSOR LOUROS SAID HE SYMPATHIZED WITH CURRENT STUDENT CAMPAIGN TO PURGE FACULTY THOROUGHLY, ALTHOUGH HE PLACED EMPHASIS ON CHANGING ATTITUDES OF MORALLY CORRUPTED AND UNDEMOCRATIC TEACHERS WHEREAS STUDENTS WANTED TO DISMISS HALF OF FACULTIES.

3. MINISTER LOUROS EXPLAINED THAT ONE ISSUE ON WHICH GOVERNMENT WOULD NOT "GIVE IN" CONCERNED STUDENT DEMAND FOR MAJOR VOICE IN FACULTY SELECTION, CURRICULUM PLANNING, AND GENERAL ADMINISTRATION OF SCHOOLS. LOUROS' OFFICIAL TOLERANCE OF STUDENT ACTIVISM APPEARED TO ENCOMPASS RECENT DISRUPTIVE TACTICS THAT HAVE PREVENTED FACULTY MEETINGS FROM PROCEEDING TO ELECT NEW ADMINISTRATIONS, AT LEAST IN THREE UNIVERSITIES. HOWEVER, ONCE FACULTIES FINALLY REORGANIZED, NEW SCHOOL ADMINISTRATIONS, WITH TRADITIONAL LEVEL OF GOVERNMENT SUPERVISION, WOULD BE IN CHARGE OF SCHOOLS.

4. LOUROS SAID THE MOST IMPORTANT STUDENT GOAL IS TO ESTABLISH DIALOGUE AS THE FASHION IN GREEK EDUCATION. OTHER STUDENT CONCERNS, WHETHER WITH FOREIGN POLICY OR WITH WHEN CLASSES WILL RESUME, APPEAR SUBORDINATE TO THE URGE FOR EDUCATIONAL REFORM. STUDENT ANTI-AMERICANISM, AS AMONG GREEKS GENERALLY, IS GOVERNED BY EMOTION AND NOT BY REASON. ACCORDING TO HIS EXPLANATION EMOTIONAL DISAPPOINTMENT WITH THE USG HAD BEEN BUILDING UP DURING THE JUNTA YEARS AND WAS CRYSTALLIZED BY THE CYPRUS DEBACLE SO THAT CARAMANLIS LOST HIS OPTIONS. CONSEQUENTLY, TOLERANCE OF STUDENT ACTIVISM, LIKE WITHDRAWAL FROM NATO, BECAME POLITICAL NECESSITIES FOR THE SURVIVAL OF CIVILIAN GOVERNMENT.

5. LOUROS TOLD AMBASSADOR THAT HIS OWN MINISTRY HAD BEEN DEBASED BY JUNTA MISMANAGEMENT. A FIRST ACHIEVEMENT WAS WITHDRAWAL OF ELEMENTARY BOOKS COLORED WITH JUNTA PROPAGANDA AND THEIR REPLACEMENT WITH SIX MILLION NEW BOOKS. FOR LOUROS PERSONALLY, HOWEVER, EVEN MORE OUTSTANDING REVELATION WAS THAT THE ARMED FORCES WERE PROFESSIONALLY BANKRUPT. IT HAD BEEN ASSUMED THAT A MILITARY GOVERNMENT WOULD AT LEAST HAVE KEPT THE ARMY IN CONDITION. ARMY INCOMPETENCE WHEN CONFRONTED WITH MOBILIZATION, HE SAID, ERODED THE PRESTIGE OF AMERICAN AND NATO COMMANDERS

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WHO FOR YEARS HAD PROCLAIMED THE GREEK FORCES TO BE IN EXCELLENT CONDITION FOR FIGHTING.

6. THE "HOT HOUSE CLIMATE" PREVAILING IN THE MINISTER'S HEAD-QUARTERS IS SYMBOLIC OF TURBULENT ATMOSPHERE THROUGHOUT GREEK UNIVERSITIES. LOUROS' MINISTRY IS BULGING WITH PERSONS WAVING AND ARTICULATING PETITIONS AND WITH COMMITTEES TRYING TO BRING FORM OUT OF CHAOS. AT SEVENTY-SIX, THE OLDEST MAN IN THE

GOVERNMENT, LOUROS MIGHT SEEM AN ODD CHOICE TO PRESIDE OVER THE
FORTUNES OF STUDENT RADICALISM. HE EXUDES A QUIET CONFIDENCE
IN HIS TASK, HOWEVER, AND SPEAKS SYMPATHETICALLY ABOUT STUDENT
OBJECTIVES SHOWING REALISTIC AND FAR-SIGHTED CONCERN FOR THE
TRENDS BOTH IN GREEK SCHOOLS AND THE SOCIETY OVERALL. THE
MINISTER WAS COURTEOUSLY RECEPTIVE TO EXPLANATIONS OF U.S.
POLICY AND EXPRESSED HOPE THAT HE COULD ENGAGE AGAIN WITH
AMBASSADOR IN DIALOGUE ON THE U.S. AND GREEK RELATIONS.
KUBISCH

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